

ILLINOIS INSTITUTION.

In twenty years there had been admitted into the Institution, 512 pupils, from 447 families—of whom 173 were deaf from birth:—2 families had 4 deaf mutes; 13 had 3; 34 had 2; in 2 cases the father was deaf and dumb; in 2 others, both parents were mutes; 28 had 1 brother deaf and dumb; and 19 had 1 sister deaf and dumb; 13 others had each 1 brother and sister deaf and dumb, while 4 had 2 sisters and 1 brother, and 3 had 2 brothers and 1 sister deaf and dumb; 2 had 3 deaf-mute sisters; 23 had relatives, other than parents and brothers and sisters, deaf and dumb.

The benevolent principles upon which social science is founded, assume that public beneficence should be exercised with an unsparing hand to throw a flood of light upon the causes which operate to produce these fearful calamities, and thereby enable us to discover the means by which they may be mitigated, and if possible removed. The great aim and end of secular education, is to advance our knowledge of nature in her numerous forms and by an adjustment of her own laws remove the obstacles which impede the progress of civilization, compel her to minister to our wants and subserve the general purposes of life.

There has, for the last few years past, been a very strong feeling in the community with regard to the marriage of relatives, as the result of investigations upon this subject show, in a most striking manner, the sad consequences of such connections. It is estimated that from 25 to 30 per cent. of deaf-mutes are the children of first cousins—a fearful warning this to those who entertain a notion of forming an union of this kind.

By a close observance of the laws which govern and regulate life and health—a proper universal care of mothers and children, and by a law prohibiting the marriage of cousins, the number of deaf-mutes might be greatly diminished—probably one-half, possibly three-fourths. It is a point which is certainly worthy of the most careful attention, and the evil should be met by a stringent law if it cannot be prevented by milder measures.